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THE
GROWTH
OF
LOVE

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The Growth of Love

THEY that in play can do the thing they would
 Having an instinct throned in reason's place,
 —And every perfect action hath the grace
 Of indolence or thoughtless hardihood—
 These are the best : yet be there workmen good
 Who lose in earnestness control of face
 Or reckon means and rapt in effort base
 Reach to their ends by steps well understood.

Me whom thou sawst of late strive with the pains
 Of one who spends his strength to rule his nerve—
 Even as a painter breathlessly who strains
 His scarcely moving hand lest it should swerve—
 Behold me now free from the care that stains
 And master of the art I chose to serve.

For thou art mine. O now I am ashamed
 To have used means to win so pure acquit
 And of my trembling fear that might have missed
 Thro' very care the gold at which I aimed :
 And am as happy but to hear thee named,
 As are those gentle souls by angels kissed
 In pictures seen leaving their marble cist
 To go before the throne of grace unblamed.

Nor furer am I water hath the skill
 To quench my thirst or that my strength is freed
 In measure, grace and motion as I will
 Than that to be myself is all I need
 For thee to be most mine : so I stand still
 And save to taste my joy no more take heed.

THE whole world now is but the minister
 Of thee to me : I see no other scheme
 But universal love from timeless dream
 Waking to thee his joy's interpreter.
 I walk around and in the fields confer
 Of love at large with tree and flower and stream
 And lift the lark descant upon my theme,
 Heaven's musical accepted worshipper.

Thy smile outfaceth ill : and that old feud
 'Twixt things and me is quashed in our new truce :
 And Nature now dearly with thee endued
 No more in shame ponders her old excuse
 But quite forgets her frowns and antics rude
 So kindly hath she grown to her new use.

THE very names of things we love are dear
 And sounds will gather beauty from their sense,
 As many a face thro' love's long residence
 Groweth to fair instead of plain and fere :
 But when I say thy name it hath no peer
 And I suppose fortune determined thence
 Her dower, that such beauty's excellence
 Should have a perfect title for the ear :

For I must think the adopting Muses chose
 Their sons by name, knowing none would be heard
 Or writ so oft in all the world as those :
 Dan Chaucer, mighty Shakespeare, then for third
 The classic Milton, and to us arose
 Shelley with liquid music in the word.

THE poets were good teachers for they taught
 Earth had this joy, but that 'twould ever be
 That fortune should be perfected in me
 My heart of hope dared not engage the thought.
 So I stood low, and now but to be caught
 By any self-styled lords of the age with thee
 Vexes my modesty, lest they should see
 I hold them owls and peacocks, things of nought.

And when we sit alone, and as I please
 I taste thy love's full smile and can enstate
 The pleasure of my kingly heart at ease :
 My thought swims like a ship, that with the weight
 Of her rich burden sleeps on the infinite seas
 Becalmed, and cannot stir her golden freight.

WHILE yet we wait for spring and from the dry
And blackening east that so embitters March,
Well housed must watch grey fields and meadows parch
And driven dust and withering snowflake fly :
Already in glimpses of the tarnished sky
The sun is warm and beckons to the larch,
And where the covert hazels interarch
Their tasselled twigs, fair beds of primrose lie.

Beneath the crisp and wintry carpet hid
A million buds but stay their blossoming,
And trustful birds have built their nests amid
The shuddering boughs, and only wait to sing
Till one soft shower from the south shall bid
And hither tempt the pilgrim steps of spring.

IN thee my spring of life hath bid the while
 A rose unfold beyond the summer's best,
 The mystery of joy made manifest
 In love's self-answering and awakening smile :
 Whereby the lips in silence reconcile
 Desire with peace, and pleading in arrest
 Of passion, shew the beauty left unguessed
 Of Greece to adorn at last the Tuscan style :

When first the wonder conquering faith had kenned
 Fancy pourtrayed, above the strength of oath
 Revealed of God or light of poem penned,
 The countenance of ancient-plighted troth
 'Twixt heaven and earth, that in one moment blend
 The hope of one and happiness of both.

For beauty being the best of all we know
 Sums up the unsearchable and secret aims
 Of nature, and on joys whose heavenly names
 Were never told can form and sense bestow.
 And man hath sped his instinct to outgo
 Nature in sound and shape, and daily frames
 Much for himself to countervail his flames,
 Building a tower above the head of woe.

And never was there work for beauty found
 Fairer than this, that she should make to cease
 The jarring woes that in the world abound.
 Nay with his sorrow may his smiles encrease
 If from man's greater need beauty redound
 And claim his tears for homage of his peace.

THUS to thy beauty doth my fond heart look
That late dismayed her faithless faith forbore
And wins again her love lost in the lore
Of schools and script of many a learned book :
For thou what ruthless death untimely took
Shalt now in better brotherhood restore
And save my battered ship that far from shore
High on the dismal deep in tempest shook.

So in despite of sorrow lately learned
I still hold true to truth since thou art true,
Nor wail the woe which thou to joy hast turned :
Nor come the heavenly fun and bathing blue
To my life's need more splendid and unearned
Than hath thy gift outmatched desire and due.

WINTER was not unkind because uncouth,
 His prisoned time made me a closer guest
 And gave thy graciousness a warmer zest
 Biting all else with keen and angry tooth :
 And bravelier the triumphant blood of youth
 Mantling thy cheek its happy home possess
 And sterner sport by day put strength to test
 And custom's feast at night gave tongue to truth.

Or say hath flaunting summer a device
 To match our midnight revelry that rang
 With steel and flame along the snow-girt ice ?
 Or when we harked to nightingales that sang
 On dewy eves in spring, did they entice
 To gentler love than winter's icy fang ?

THERE'S many a would-be poet at this hour
 Rhymes of a love and truth he never wooed
 And o'er his lamplit desk in solitude
 Deems that he sitteth in the Muses' bower.
 And while such thewless kine the fat devour
 And ever grow the leaner for their food
 Men look askance upon an art pursued
 By clerks that lack the pulse and smile of power.

So none of all our company, I boast,
 But now would mock my writing could they see
 How down the right it maps a jagged coast :
 Seeing they hold the manlier praise to be
 Strong hand and will and the heart best when most
 'Tis sober, simple, true and fancy-free.

How could I quarrel or blame you most dear
 Who all thy virtues gavest and kept back none :
 Kindness and gentleness, truth without peer
 And beauty that my fancy fed upon ?

Now not my life's contrition for my fault
 Can blot that day nor work me recompence,
 Tho' I might worthily thy worth exalt
 Making thee long amends for short offence.

For surely nowhere, love, if not in thee
 Are grace and truth and beauty to be found :
 And all my praise of these can only be
 A praise of thee, howe'er by thee disowned :

While still thou must be mine tho' far removed,
 And I for one offence no more beloved.

Now since to me altho' by thee refused
 The world is left, I shall find pleasure still :
 The art I have ever loved but little used
 Will yield a world of fancies at my will.

And tho' where'er thou goest it is from me,
 I where I go thee in my heart must bear :
 And what thou wert that wilt thou ever be,
 My choice, my best, my loved and only fair.

Farewell, yet think not such farewell a change
 From tendernefs, tho' once to meet or part
 But on short absence so could sense derange
 That tears have graced the greeting of my heart :

They were proud drops and had my leave to fall :
 Not on thy pity for my pain to call.

WHEN sometimes in an ancient house where state
 From noble ancestry is handed on,
 We see but desolation thro' the gate
 And richest heirlooms all to ruin gone :

Because maybe some fancied shame or fear
 Bred of disease or melancholy fate
 Hath driven the owner from his rightful sphere
 To wander nameless save to pity or hate.

What is the wreck of all he hath in fief
 When he that hath is wrecking ? nought is fine
 Vnto the sick, nor doth it burden grief
 That the house perish when the soul doth pine.

Thus I may state despise, slain by a sting
 So slight 'twould not have hurt a meaner thing.

WHO builds a ship must first lay down the keel
 Of health, whereto the ribs of mirth are wed :
 And knit with beams and knees of strength, a bed
 For decks of purity, her floor and ceil.
 Vpon her masts, adventure, pride and zeal,
 To fortune's wind the sails of purpose spread :
 And at the prow make figured maidenhead
 O'erride the seas and answer to the wheel.

And let him deep in memory's hold have stored
 Water of Helicon : and let him fit
 The needle that doth true with heaven accord :
 Then bid her crew, love, diligence and wit
 With justice, courage, temperance come aboard,
 And at her helm the master reason fit.

THIS world is unto God a work of art
 Of which the unaccomplished heavenly plan
 Lives in his masterpiece and grows with man
 Vnto perfection and success in part.
 The ultimate creation stayed to start
 From the last creature for whom all began :
 Who child in what he is and what he can
 Hath yet God's judgement and desire at heart.

Knowledge denied him, and his little skill
 Cumbered by laws he never can annul,
 Baffled by qualities adverse and ill,
 With feeble hands, few years and senses dull,
 His art is nature's nature, and love still
 Makes his abode with the most beautiful,

SAY who be these light-bearded funburnt faces
In negligent and travel-stained array
That in the city of Dante come to-day
Haughtily visiting her holy places ?
O these be noble men that hide their graces,
True England's blood, her ancient glory's stay,
By tales of fame diverted on their way
Home from the rule of oriental races.

Life-trifling lions these, of gentle eyes
And motion delicate, but swift to fire
For honour, passionate where duty lies,
Most loved and loving : and they quickly tire
Of Florence, that the one day more denies
The embrace of wife and son, of sister or fire.

WHERE San Miniato's convent from the sun
 At forenoon overlooks the city of flowers
 I sat, and gazing on her domes and towers
 Called up her famous children one by one :
 And three who all the rest had far outdone,
 Mild Giotto first, who stole the morning hours,
 I saw, and god-like Buonarroti's powers,
 And Dante, gravest poet, her much wronged son.

Is all this glory, I said, another's praise ?
 Are these heroic triumphs things of old
 And do I dead upon the living gaze ?
 Or rather doth the mind that can behold
 The wondrous beauty of the works and days
 Create the image that her thoughts enfold.

REJOICE ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,
 Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright
 And that your names remembered day and night
 Live on the lips of those that love you well.
 Rejoice ye living, ye that now excel
 And guard in nameless homes the sacred light :
 Rejoice, tho' prosperous folly in her spite
 Banish all them that from her rule rebel.

For the world's exile hath a richer meed
 Than a king's favourite : he shall arrive
 With the like triumph and return decreed
 To him who ne'er revisited alive
 His home but fang, *Doubt not I shall succeed*
For all the hindrance they within contrive.

WHO praiseth? If the poet have not known
 His work is beautiful, none can persuade :
 Nor doth our time that so wrongs Handel's shade
 Contrive his condemnation but its own.
 The comment writ on Shakespeare hath not shewn
 The perfect judgement that alive he laid
 On his own work, which taketh since 'twas made
 Grace nor disgrace fave but of love alone.

And love in loving nothing that is vile
 Knows not the error of the mind, nor fears
 To set his seal in secret with a smile :
 But O could one as Purcell win the tears
 Of love, such praise were more than to beguile
 The learned fancies of a thousand years.

THE world still goeth about to shew and hide,
 Befooled of all opinion, fond of fame :
 But he that can do well taketh no pride
 And see'th his error, undisturbed by shame :

So poor's the best our longest days can do,
 The most so little, diligently done,
 So mighty is the beauty that doth woo,
 So vast the joy that love from love hath won.

God's love to win is easy, for He loveth
 Desire's fair attitude, nor strictly weighs
 The broken thing, but all alike approveth
 Which love hath aimed at Him : that is heaven's praise :

And if we look for any praise on earth
 'Tis in man's love : all else is nothing worth.

O FLESH and blood, comrade to tragic pain
 And clownish merriment : whose sense could wake
 Sermons in stones, and count death but an ache,
 All things as vanity, yet nothing vain :
 The world set in thy heart thy passionate strain
 Revealed anew : but thou for man didst make
 Nature twice natural, only to shake
 Her kingdom with the creatures of thy brain.

Lo Shakespeare, since thy time nature is loth
 To yield to art her fair supremacy ;
 In conquering one thou hast so enrichèd both.
 What shall I say ? for God—whose wife decree
 Confirmeth all He did by all He doth—
 Doubled His whole creation making thee.

I wouLD be a bird, and straight on wings I arise
 And carry purpose up to the ends of the air :
 In calm and storm my sails I feather and where
 By freezing cliffs the unransomed wreckage lies :
 Or strutting on hot meridian banks surprise
 The silence : over plains in the moonlight bare
 I chase my shadow and perch where no bird dare
 In treetops torn by fiercest winds of the skies.

Poor simple birds, foolish birds ! then I cry,
 Ye pretty pictures of delight, unstirred
 By the only joy of knowing that ye fly :
 Ye are not what ye are, but rather, summed in a word,
 The alphabet of a god's idea, and I
 Who master it, I am the only bird.

O WEARY pilgrims chaunting of your woe
That turn your eyes to all the peaks that shine,
Hailing in each the citadel divine
The which ye thought to have entered long ago
Until at length your feeble steps and flow
Falter upon the threshold of the shrine,
And your hearts overburdened doubt in fine
Whether it be Jerufalem or no :

Disheartened pilgrims, I am one of you,
For having worshipped many a barren face
I scarce now greet the goal I journeyed to :
I stand a pagan in the heavenly place,
Beneath the lamp of truth I am found untrue
And question with the glory I embrace.

SPRING hath her own bright days of calm and peace :
 Her melting air, at every breath we draw,
 Floods heart with love to praise God's gracious law :
 But suddenly—so short is pleasure's lease—
 The cold returns, the buds from growing cease
 And nature's conquered face is full of awe :
 As now the traitrous north with icy flaw
 Freezes the dew upon the sick lamb's fleece,

And 'neath the mock sun searching everywhere
 Rattles the crispèd leaves with shivering din :
 So that the birds are silent with despair
 Within the thickets, nor their armour thin
 Will gaudy flies adventure in the air
 Nor any lizard sun his spotted skin.

Nothing is joy without thee : I can find
No rapture in the first relays of spring,
In songs of birds, in young buds opening,
Nothing inspiriting and nothing kind :
For lack of thee who once wert throned behind
All beauty, like a strength where graces cling :
The jewel and heart of light which everything
Wrestled in rivalry to hold enshrined.

Ah ! since thou'rt fled and I in each fair fight
The sweet occasion of my joy deplore,
Where shall I seek thee best or whom invite
Within thy sacred temples and adore ?
Who shall fill thought and truth with old delight
And lead my soul in life as heretofore ?

THE work is done and from the fingers fall
 The bloodwarm tools that brought the labour thro' :
 The tasking eye that overunneth all
 Rests, and affirms there is no more to do.

Now the third joy of making, the sweet flower
 Of blessed work bloometh in godlike spirit :
 Which whoſo plucketh holdeth for an hour
 The shrivelling vanity of mortal merit.

And thou, my perfect work, thou'rt of to-day :
 To-morrow a poor and alien thing wilt be,
 True only ſhould the ſwift life ſtand at ſtay :
 Therefore farewell nor look to bide with me.

Go find thy friends if there be one to love thee :
 Caſting thee forth, my child, I riſe above thee.

THE fabled seafnake, old Leviathan,
 Or else what grisly beast of scaly chine
 That champ'd the oceanwrack and swall'd the brine
 Before the new and milder days of man,
 Had never rib nor bray nor swindging fan
 Like his iron swimmer of the Clyde or Tyne,
 Late born of golden seed to breed a line
 Of offspring swifter and more huge of plan.

Straight is her going, for upon the fun
 When once she hath looked, her path and place are plain :
 With tireless speed she smiteth one by one
 The shuddering seas and foams along the main :
 And her eased breath when her wild race is run
 Roars thro' her nostrils like a hurricane.

A THOVSAND times hath in my heart's behoof
 My tongue been fet his passion to impart :
 A thousand times hath my too coward heart
 My mouth reclosed and fixed it to the roof :
 Then with such cunning hath it held aloof,
 A thousand times kept silence with such art
 That words could do no more : yet on thy part
 Hath silence given a thousand times reproof.

I should be bolder, seeing I commend
 Love that my dilatory purpose primes,
 But fear lest with my fears my hope should end.
 Nay I would truth deny and burn my rhymes,
 Renew my sorrows rather than offend,
 A thousand times and yet a thousand times.

I TRAVEL to thee with the sun's first rays
 That lift the dark west and unwrap the night :
 I dwell beside thee when he walks the height
 And fondly toward thee at his setting gaze.
 I wait upon thy coming, but always—
 Dancing to meet my thoughts if they invite—
 Thou hast outrun their longing with delight
 And in my solitude dost mock my praise.

I well might say 'twere better not to have been
 Than such I am to be for such as thou :
 And couldst thou love me more my heart I'd wean
 And win a claim that none could disallow :
 But since that cannot be, O love, I lean
 Upon thy strength and ne'er was strong till now.

My lady pleases me and I please her,
This know we both and I besides know well
Wherefore I love her and I love to tell
My love as all my loving songs aver.
But what on her part could the passion stir
Tho' 'tis more difficult for love to spell
Yet can I dare divine how this befel
Nor will her lips deny it if I err.

She loves me first because I love her, then
Loves me for knowing why she should be loved,
And that I love to praise her, loves again.
So from her beauty both our loves are moved
And by her beauty are sustained, nor when
The earth falls from the sun is this disproved.

IN all things beautiful I cannot see
 Her sit or stand, but love is stirred anew :
 'Tis joy to watch the folds fall as they do,
 And all that comes is past expectancy.
 If she be silent, silence let it be :
 He who would bid her speak might fit and sue
 The deep-browed Phidian Jove to be untrue
 To his two thousand years solemnity.

Ah but her launchèd passion when she sings
 Wins on the hearing like a shapen prow
 Borne by the mastery of its urgent wings :
 Or if she deign her wisdom, she doth show
 She hath the intelligence of heavenly things
 Unfulled by man's mortal overthrow,

Thus to be humbled : 'tis that ranging pride
 No refuge hath : that in his castle strong
 Brave reason fits beleaguered who so long
 Kept field but now must starve where he doth hide :
 That industry who once the foe defied
 Lies slaughtered in the trenches : that the throng
 Of idle fancies pipe their foolish song
 Where late the puissant captains fought and died.

Thus to be humbled : 'tis to be undone,
 A forest felled, a city razed to ground,
 A cloak unsewn, unwoven and unspun
 Till not a thread remains that can be wound.
 And yet, O lover, thee the ruined one
 Love who hath humbled thus hath also crowned.

I CARE not if I live; tho' life and breath
 Have never been to me so dear and sweet.
 I care not if I die, for I could meet—
 Being so happy—happily my death.
 I care not if I love : to-day she faith
 She loveth, and love's history is complete.
 Nor care I if she love me : at her feet
 My spirit bows entranced and worshippeth.

I have no care for what was most my care
 But all around me see fresh beauty born
 And common sights grown lovelier than they were :
 I dream of love, and in the light of morn
 Tremble beholding all things very fair
 And strong with strength that puts my strength to scorn:

O *MY goddess divine* sometimes I say :
 Now let this word for ever and all suffice :
 Thou art insatiable, and yet not twice
 Can even thy lover give his soul away :
 And for my acts, that at thy feet I lay,
 For never any other by device
 Of wisdom love or beauty could entice
 My homage to the measure of this day.

I have no more to give thee : lo, I have fold
 My life, have emptied out my heart and spent
 Whate'er I had : till like a beggar, bold
 With nought to lose, I laugh and am content.
 A beggar kisses thee, nay love, behold,
 I fear not : thou too art in beggarment.

ALL earthly beauty hath one cause and proof,
 To lead the pilgrim foul to beauty above :
 Yet lieth the greater blifs so far aloof
 That few there be are weaned from earthly love.

Joy's ladder it is, reaching from home to home,
 The best of all the work that all was good :
 Whereof 'twas writ the angels aye upclomb,
 Down sped, and at the top the Lord God stood.

But I my time abuse, my eyes by day
 Centered on thee, by night my heart on fire—
 Letting my numbered moments run away—
 Nor e'en 'twixt night and day to heaven aspire.

So true it is that what the eye seeth not
 But flow is loved and loved is soon forgot.

ALREADY far have we sailed out to sea,
Enough have proved our bark and hear the roar
Of tempest overnigh that more and more
Rages and lightens on the whitened lea.
See how with naked masts the tall ships flee
Like frightened phantoms from the dangerous shore,
And not a boat contrives with sail or oar
To stem the foundering waves : how then shall we ?

Now time it is to make for port and haste
In safety with the joy our perils earn :
But let us vow that first the shrine be graced
Of him who moves and draws all souls that yearn,
With fair memorials of devotion placed
For venturous voyage and for safe return.

THE blifs that Adam loft—eating in hafte—

He loft not all, for what he had he had :
 And ftill his fons are born as pure and glad
 As he when firft by God in Eden placed.
 But what he won for them—daring to tafte—
 He won outright, whether for good or bad :
 And in his footfteps all muft iffue fad
 Out of their garden, exiled and difgraced.

And therefore knowledge hath two hands : with one
 Preffed to her prifoned heart that mourns and yearns
 She guards her firftborn joy and fhares with none :
 But with her bufy right ſhe moves and turns
 All tangible things, or gazing on the fun
 Shades her adventurous eye and ever learns.

O my life's mischief, once my love's delight,
 That drew'st a mortgage on my heart's estate,
 Whose baneful clause is never out of date,
 Nor can avenging time restore my right :
 Whom first to lose founded that note of spite
 Whereto my doleful days were tuned by fate :
 That art the well-loved cause of all my hate,
 The fun whose wandering makes my hopeless night :

Thou being in all my lacking all I lack,
 It is thy goodness turns my grace to crime,
 Thy fleetness from my goal which holds me back :
 Wherefore my feet go out of step with time,
 My very grasp of life is old and slack
 And even my passion falters in my rhyme:

At times with hurried hoofs and scattering dust
I race by field or highway, and my horse
Spare not but urge direct in headlong course
Unto some fair far hill that gain I must :
But near arrived the vision soon mistrust,
Rein in and stand as one who sees the source
Of strong illusion, shaming thought to force
From off his mind the foil of passion's guft.

My brow I bare then and with slackened speed
Can view the country pleasant on all sides
And to kind salutation give good heed.
I ride as one who for his pleasure rides
And stroke the neck of my delighted steed
And seek what cheer the village inn provides.

AN idle June day on the sunny Thames,
 Floating or rowing as our fancy led,
 Now listening to sweet things the young birds said
 And choosing now a nosegay from the gems
 That star the embroidery of the bank that hems
 The current that our skiff from Henley sped
 To where the Cliefden woods o'er Maidenhead
 Bar its still surface with their mirrored stems.

I would have life—thou saidst—all as this day,
 Simple enjoyment calm in its excess,
 With not a grief to cloud and not a ray
 Of passion overhot my peace to oppress :
 With no ambition to reproach delay,
 Nor rapture to disturb its happiness.

WHETHER it be happinefs to have enough
And fear no want while moft are poorly fed,
To bring untired limbs to an eafy bed
While any workman's couch is cold and rough :
And whether honour be of fuch dull ftuff
As likes the peace for which a brother bled,
And virtue yet untried in comfort bred
Can know her name and feel no felf-rebuff :

Or if to yield themfelves to worfe and worfe
Were truly folace for the hearts that chafe—
Since their nobility would choofe the curfe
Rather to be than once deride the waif,
Or hear the laugh—O blame not my poor verfe
That it is fad while comfort ftill is fafe.

A MAN that sees by chance his picture, made
 As once a child he was, handling some toy,
 Will gaze to find his spirit within the boy,
 Yet hath no secret with the soul portrayed :
 He cannot think the simple thought which played
 Vpon those features then so frank and coy :
 'Tis his, yet oh ! not his : and o'er the joy
 His fatherly pity bends in tears dismayed.

Proud of his prime maybe he stand at best
 And lightly wear his strength or aim it high,
 Most master now of all he e'er possessest :
 Yet in the pictured face a charm doth lie,
 The one thing lost more worth than all the rest,
 Which seeing he fears to say *This child was I.*

TEARS of love, tears of joy and tears of care,
 Comforting tears that fell uncomforted,
 Tears o'er the new-born, tears beside the dead,
 Tears of hope, pride and pity, trust and prayer :
 Tears of contrition, all tears whatsoe'er,
 Of tenderness or kindness had she shed
 Who here is pictured, ere upon her head
 The fine gold might be turned to silver there.

The smile that charmed the father hath given place
 Vnto the furrowed care wrought by the son :
 But virtue hath transformed all change to grace.
 So that I praise the artist who hath done
 A portrait for my worship of the face
 Won by the heart my father's heart that won.

IF I could but forget and not recall
 So well my time of pleasure and of play
 When ancient nature was all new and gay
 Light as the fashion that doth last enthrall :
 Ah mighty nature, when my heart was small
 Nor dreamed what fearful searchings underlay
 The flowers and leafy ecstasy of may,
 The breathing summer sloth, the scented fall.

Could I forget, then were the fight not hard,
 Pressed in the melee of accursed things,
 Having such help in love and such reward :
 But that 'tis I who once—'tis this that stings—
 Once dwelt within the gate that angels guard,
 Where yet I'd be had I but heavenly wings.

WHEN I see childhood on the threshold-seize
 The prize of life from age and likelihood,
 I mourn time's change that will not be withstood,
 Thinking how Christ said *Be like one of these*.
 For in the forest among many trees
 Scarce one in all is found that hath made good
 The virgin pattern of its slender wood
 That courtiesied in joy to every breeze :

But scathed, but knotted trunks that raise on high
 Their arms in stiff contortion, strained and bare :
 Whose crowns in patriarchal sorrow sigh.
 So little children ye—nay nay, ye ne'er
 From me shall learn how sure the change and nigh
 When ye shall share our strength and mourn to share.

WHEN parched with thirst, astray on sultry sands
 The traveller faints, upon his closing ear
 Steals a fantastic music : he may hear
 The babbling fountain of his native land,
 Before his eyes the vision seems to stand
 Where at its terraced brink the maids appear
 Who fill their deep urns at its waters clear
 And not refuse the help of lover's hand.

O cruel jest—he cries, as some one flings
 The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire—
 O shameless, O contempt of holy things.
 But never of their wanton play they tire
 As not athirst they sit beside the springs
 While he must quench in death his lost desire.

THE image of thy love, rising on dark
 And desperate days above my fullen sea
 Wakens again fresh hope and peace in me,
 Gleaming above upon my groaning bark.
 Whate'er my sorrow be I then may hark
 A loving voice : whate'er my terror be
 This heavenly comfort still I win from thee
 To shine my lodestar that wert once my mark.

Prodigal nature makes us but to taste
 One perfect joy, which given she niggard grows
 And lest her precious gift should run to waste
 Adds to its loss a thousand lesser woes :
 So to the memory of the gift that graced
 Her hand, her graceless hand more grace bestows.

I WILL not marry thee, sweet Hope—I said—
 For all thy beauty nor thy promise sworn :
 Tho' thou the dayspring pledge, and rosy morn
 Already captive in thy train hast led.
 No clouded terror o'er the sun is spread,
 No noonday darkness like of love outworn :
 The cold star on his shining orbit borne
 With all his valleys dry, his verdure dead.

Nor hast thou any power to thrust aside
 Fate's cruel hand, nor any refuge shewn
 Where comfortless my widowed shame could hide.
 For me—in my cold sepulchre I'd groan
 Hearing men say, *See Hope, so late love's bride,*
Whom now this vain Ambition has made his own.

IN this neglected, ruined edifice
 Of works unperfected and broken schemes,
 Where is the promise of my early dreams,
 The smile of beauty and the pearl of price ?
 No charm is left now that could once entice
 Wind-wavering fortune from her golden streams,
 And full in flight decrepit purpose seems
 Trailing the banner of his old device.

Within the house a froze and numbing air
 Has chilled endeavour : sickly memories reign
 In every room and ghosts are on the stair :
 And hope behind the dusty window-pane
 Watches the days go by, and half aware
 Forecasts her last reproach and mortal stain.

ONCE I would say, before thy vision came,
My joy, my life, my love, and with some kind
 Of knowledge speak and think I knew my mind
 Of heaven and hope, and each word hit its aim.
 Whate'er their sounds be, now all mean the same,
 Denoting each the fair I cannot find :
 Or if I say them 'tis as one long blind
 Forgets what fights they were he used to name.

Now if men speak of love 'tis not my love
 Nor are their hopes nor joys mine, nor the life
 They choose for praise the life I reckon of :
 Nay tho' they turn from house and child and wife
 And self, and in the thought of heaven above
 Hold, as do I, all mortal things at strife.

SINCE then 'tis only pity looking back,
 Fear looking forward, and the bufy mind
 Will in one woeful moment more upwind
 Than lifelong years unroll of bitter or black :
 What is man's privilege, his hoarding knack
 Of memory with foreboding fo combined,
 Whereby he comes to dream he hath of kind
 The perpetuity which all things lack ?

Which but to hope is doubtful joy, to have
 Being a continuance of what, alas,
 We mourn and fcarcely bear with to the grave :
 Or fomething fo unknown that it o'erpaſs
 The thought of comfort : and the fenſe that gave
 Cannot confider it thro' any glaſs.

COME gentle sleep, I woo thee : come and take
Not now the child into thine arms, from fright
Composed by drowsy tune and shaded light,
Whom ignorant of thee thou didst nurse and make :
Nor now the boy who scorned thee for the sake
Of growing knowledge or mysterious night,
Tho' with fatigue thou didst his limbs invite
And heavily weigh the eyes he strove to wake :

No, nor the man severe who from his best
Failing, alert fled to thee, that his breath,
Blood, force and fire should come at morn redrest :
But me, from whom thy comfort tarrieth,
For all my wakeful prayer sent without rest
To thee, O shew and shadow of my death.

LET man lament his lot and then lament
 That he must so lament and then complain
 That all his lamentations are in vain :
 His tears betray his true affection's bent.
 For liefest love first falls to discontent :
 As they who best know health will rage at pain
 And pine beyond their sickness to regain
 Their treasure treasured most when lost or spent.

Which being in them a dolour, none the less
 Inspires the cries of prime. The truly sad
 Are dumb : and they but honour happiness
 Who hanker after joys that once they had :
 Or surfeited of sweets turn and confess
 Their pleasure is to be no longer glad.

THE spirit's eager sense for sad or gay
 Filleth with what he will our vessel full :
 Be joy his bent, he waiteth not joy's day
 But like a child at any toy will pull :

 If sorrow, he will mourn for fancy's sake
 And spoil heaven's plenty with forbidden care.
 What fortune most denies we slave to take :
 Nor can fate load us more than we can bear.

 And since in having pleasure disappeareth,
 He who hath least in hand hath most at heart
 While he keep hope : as he who alway feareth
 A grief that never comes hath still the smart :

 And worse than true is such unreal distress
 For when God sendeth sorrow, it doth bless.

THE world comes not to an end : her city-hives
 Swarm with the tokens of a changeless trade,
 With rolling wheel, driver and flagging jade,
 Rich men and beggars, children, priests and wives.
 New homes on old are set as lives on lives,
 Invention with invention overlaid :
 But still or tool or toy or book or blade
 Shaped for the hand that holds and toils and strives.

The men I meet work as their fathers wrought
 With little bettered means : for works depend
 On works and overlap, and thought on thought.
 And thro' all change the smiles of hope amend
 The weariest face, the same love changed in nought :
 In this thing too the world comes not to an end.

SINCE in the love of Christ my enterprife
To do thee honour groweth day by day,
And with the growth of love the words I say
Are daily worthier of thee and more wise :
Like a rich Jew I book my merchandife
In fairest hand and hoard my gains away,
Counting the hours ere I shall quite repay
More than the full account against me lies.

But not the joy : alas I in my grave
Shall be and thou in thine ere this befall :
'Tis but a memory my verse can save.
Of this my wealth too if I give thee all
Sorrow for pleasure pay I, and I crave
A loan of time that flies beyond recall.

O MY uncared-for songs what are ye worth,
That in my secret book with so much care
I write you, this one here and that one there,
Marking the time and order of your birth?
How, with a fancy so unkind to mirth,
A sense so hard, a style so worn and bare,
Look ye for any welcome anywhere
From any shelf or heart-home on the earth?

Should others ask you this, say then I yearned
To write you such as once, when I was young,
Finding I should have loved and thereto turned.
'Twere something yet to live again among
The gentle youth beloved and where I learned
My art be there remembered for my song.

Who takes the census of the living dead,
Ere the day come when memory shall o'ercrowd
The kingdom of their fame, and for that proud
And airy people find no room nor stead ?

Ere hoarding Time, that ever thrusteth back
The fairest treasures of his ancient store,
Better with best confound, so he may pack
His greedy gatherings closer, more and more ?

Let the true Muse rewrite her sullied page
And purge her story of the men of hate,
That they go dirgeless down to Satan's rage
With all else foul deformed and miscreate :

She hath full toil to keep the names we love
Honoured on earth as they are bright above.

I HEARD great Hector sounding war's alarms
 Where thro' the listless ghosts chiding he strode,
 As tho' the Greeks besieged his last abode,
 And he his Troy's hope still, her king at arms.
 But on those gentle meads where nothing harms
 And purpose perishes, his passion glowed
 Like the cold nightworm's candle nor scarce shewed
 The heart death kills not quite nor Lethè charms.

'Twas plain to read even by those shadows quaint,
 How rude catastrophe had dimmed his day
 And blighted all his cheer with stern complaint.
To arms ! to arms ! what more the voice would say
 Was swallowed in the valleys and grew faint
 Vpon the thin air as he passed away.

SINCE peace came down to me, I well know whence,
 O perfected and happy spirit, 'twas sped :
 And who did lead me whither I was led,
 Drawn by sweet airs and plaintive innocence.
 So lost when thou didst seem departing hence,
 I too enrolled myself among the dead
 And left my home of homes unvisited,
 Exiled from memory for my woe's defence.

But see the doors fast shut by grief and pride,
 Reopened : see kind peace returned in spite
 Of this sad heart which thee so long denied :
 For thou my joy, whate'er, or day or night,
 I think or do, again art by my side,
 My lost and won, my treasure and life's delight.

SWEET sleep, dear unadornèd bride of toil,
 Whom in the dusk of night men's bodies low
 Lie to receive, and thy loved coming know,
 Closing the cloudy gate on day's turmoil :
 Thou thro' the soft ways entrest to despoil
 The ready spirit and on worn flesh bestow
 Such comfort as thro' trembling souls will flow
 When God's *Welldone* doth all their sins assail.

Thought looseth at thy touch her troubled hold,
 Hand, eye and ear fail, and the world's fair show
 Is blotted clean : or then thou mayst unfold—
 Brightening the hours of sure renewal flow—
 Thy careless pageantries, pictures untold,
 Joys which the tasking fun melteth like snow.

SINCE not the enamoured sun with glance more fond
 Kisses the foliage of his sacred tree,
 Than doth my waking thought arise on thee,
 Loving none near thee, like thee nor beyond :
 Nay since I am sworn thy slave and in the bond
 Is writ my promise of eternity :
 Since to such high hope thou'lt encouraged me
 That if thou look but from me I despond :

Since thou'rt my all in all, O think of this ;
 Think of the dedication of my youth :
 Think of my loyalty, my joy, my blifs :
 Think of my sorrow, my despair and ruth,
 My sheer annihilation if I miss :
 Think—if thou shouldst be false—think of thy truth.

THESE meagre rhymes which a returning mood
 Sometimes o'errateth, I as oft despise :
 And knowing them illnatured, stiff and rude,
 See them as others with contemptuous eyes.

Nay and I wonder less at God's respect
 For man, a minim jot in time and space,
 Than at the soaring faith of His elect,
 That gift of gifts, the comfort of His grace.

O work unfearchable, O heavenly love,
 Most infinitely tender, so to touch
 The work that we can meanly reckon of :
 Surely—I say—we are favoured overmuch.

But of this wonder, what doth most amaze
 Is that we know our love is held for praise.

BEAUTY sat with me all the summer day,
 Awaiting the sure triumph of her eye :
 Nor marked I till we parted how, hard by,
 Love in her train stood ready for his prey.
 She as too proud to join herself the fray,
 Trusting too much to her divine ally,
 When she saw victory tarry chid him—"Why
 Dost thou not at one stroke this rebel slay?"

Then generous Love who holds my heart in fee
 Told of our ancient truce : so from the fight
 We straight withdrew our forces, all the three.
 Baffled but not disheartened she took flight,
 Scheming new tactics : Love came home with me
 And prompts my measured verses as I write.

IN autumn moonlight when the white air wan
 Is fragrant in the wake of summer hence
 'Tis sweet to sit entranced and muse thereon
 In melancholy and godlike indolence :

When the proud spirit lulled by mortal prime
 To fond pretence of immortality
 Vieweth all moments from the birth of time,
 All things whate'er have been or yet shall be.

And like the garden where the year is spent,
 The ruin of old life is full of yearning,
 Mingling poetic rapture of lament
 With flowers and sunshine of spring's fure returning :

Only in visions of the white air wan
 By godlike fancy seized and dwelt upon.

WHEN first I saw thee, dearest, if I say
 The spells that conjure back the hour and place,
 And evermore I look upon thy face,
 As in the spring of years long passed away :
 No fading of thy beauty's rich array,
 No detriment of age on thee I trace,
 But time's defeat written in spoils of grace,
 Robbed from the rivals thou didst pity and slay.

So hath thy growth been, thus thy faith is true,
 Unchanged in change, still to my growing sense,
 To life's desire the same, and nothing new :
 But as thou wert in dream and prescience
 At love's arising, now thou standst to view
 In the broad noon of his magnificence.

TWAS on the very day winter took leave
 Of those fair fields I love, when to the skies
 The fragrant Earth was smiling in surprise
 At that her heaven-descended quick reprieve,
 I wandered forth my sorrow to relieve,
 Yet walked amid sweet pleasure in such wise
 As Adam went alone in Paradise,
 Before God of His pity fashioned Eve.

And out of tune with all the joy around
 I laid me down beneath a flowering tree
 And o'er my senses crept a sleep profound :
 In which it seemed that thou wert given to me,
 Rending my body where with hurried sound
 I feel my heart beat when I think of thee.

Love that I know, love I am wise in, love
 My strength, my pride, my grace, my skill untaught,
 My faith here upon earth, my hope above,
 My contemplation and perpetual thought :

The pleasure of my fancy, my heart's fire,
 My joy, my peace, my praise, my happy theme,
 The aim of all my doing, my desire
 Of being, my life by day, by night my dream :

Love, my sweet melancholy, my distress,
 My pain, my doubt, my trouble, my despair,
 My only folly and unhappiness,
 And in my careless moments still my care :

O love, sweet love, earthly love, love divine,
 Sayst thou to-day, O love, that thou art mine ?

THE dark and ferious angel who so long
Vexed his immortal strength in charge of me
Hath smiled for joy and fled in liberty
To take his pastime with the peerless throng.
Oft had I done his noble keeping wrong,
Wounding his heart to wonder what might be
God's purpose in a soul of such degree :
And there he had left me but for mandate strong.

But seeing thee with me now, his task at close
He knoweth, and wherefore he was bid to stay
And work confusion of so many foes.
The thanks he looks to have from me I pay,
Yet fear some heavenly envy as he goes
Vnto what great reward I cannot say.

THOUGH others love Thee less I will stand true,
 Nor can it be that I should ever leave Thee :
 Thou knowst my heart and if it could deceive Thee
 It would not wrong Thee thus as others do.
 I spend the day telling my vows anew,
 And hold my courage ready lest I grieve Thee,
 And count my words lest chance offence bereave Thee
 Of one poor sheep out of Thy flock so few :

And call on Thee my Lord, my Strength, my Stay,
 That if I faint or fall Thou wilt restore me
 And feed me with fresh comfort day by day.
 Nay tho' it be Thy terrors all pass o'er me
 Lo ! I will fear no evil, for I say
Surely Thy grace will be sufficient for me.

I WILL be what God made me, nor protest
Against the bent of genius in my time :
That science of my friends robs all the best,
While I love beauty and was born to rhyme.

Be they our mighty men and let me dwell
In shadow among the mighty shades of old,
With love's forsaken palace for my cell :
Whence I look forth and all the world behold :

And say, These better days, in best things worse,
This bastardy of time's magnificence,
Will mend in fashion and throw off the curse,
To crown new love with higher excellence.

Curfed tho' I be to live my life alone,
My toil is for man's joy, his joy my own,

I LIVE on hope and that I think do all
Who come into this world, and since I see
Myself in swim with such good company
I take my comfort whatsoe'er befall.
I abide and abide, as if more stout and tall
My spirit would grow by waiting like a tree :
And clear of others' toil it pleaseth me
In dreams their quick ambition to forestall.

And if thro' careless eagerness I slide
To some accomplishment, I give my voice
Still to desire and in desire abide.
I have no stake abroad : if I rejoice
In what is done or doing, I confide
Neither to friend nor foe my secret choice.

YE bleffed faints that now in heaven enjoy
The purchafe of thofe tears the world's difdain,
Doth love ftill with his war your peace annoy,
Or hath Death freed you from his ancient pain ?

Have ye no fpringtide and no burft of May
In flowers and leafy trees, when folemn night
Pants with love mufic, and the holy day
Breaks on the ear with fongs of heavenly light ?

What make ye and what ftrove for ? keep ye thought
Of us, or in new excellence divine
Is old forgot : or do ye count for naught
What the Greek did and what the Florentine ?

We keep your memories well : O in your ftore
Live not our beft joys treafured evermore ?

AH heavenly joy ! But who hath ever heard,
 Who hath seen joy, or who shall ever find
 Joy's language ? There is neither speech nor word :
 Nought but itself to teach it to mankind.

Scarce in our twenty thousand painful days
 We may touch something : but there lives—beyond
 The best of art, or nature's kindest phase—
 The hope whereof our spirit is fain and fond :

The cause of beauty given to man's desires,
 Writ in the expectancy of starry skies,
 The faith which gloweth in our fleeting fires,
 The aim of all the excellence we prize :

Which but to love, pursue and pray for well
 Maketh earth heaven, and to forget it, hell.

My wearied heart, whenever, after all,
Its loves and yearnings shall be told complete,
When gentle death shall bid it cease to beat,
And from all dear illusions disenthrall :
However then thou shalt appear to call
My fearful heart, since down at others' feet
It bade me kneel so oft, I'll not retreat
From thee nor fear before thy feet to fall.

And I shall say "Receive this loving heart
Which erred in sorrow only : and in sin
Took no delight : but being forced apart
From thee, without thee hoping thee to win,
Most prized what most thou madest as thou art
On earth, till heaven were open to enter in."

DREARY was winter, wet with changeful fling
Of clinging snowfall and fast-flying frost :
And bitterer northwinds then withheld the spring
That dallied with her promise till 'twas lost.

A sunless and half-hearted summer drowned
The flowers in needful and unwelcomed rain :
And Autumn with a sad smile fled uncrowned
From fruitless orchards and unripened grain.

But could the skies of this most desolate year
In its last month learn with our love to glow,
Men yet should rank its cloudless atmosphere
Above the sunsets of five years ago :

Of my great praise too part should be its own,
Now reckoned peerless for thy love alone.

AWAY now, lovely Muse, roam and be free :
Our commerce ends for aye, thy task is done :
Tho' to win thee I left all else unwon,
Thou whom I most have won art not for me.
My first desire, thou too forgone must be,
Thou too O much lamented now tho' none
Will turn to pity thy forsaken son,
Nor thy divine sisters will weep for thee.

None will weep for thee : thou return, O Muse,
To thy Sicilian fields : I once have been
On thy loved hills, and where thou first didst use
Thy sweetly balanced rhyme, unthankful queen,
Have plucked and wreathed thy flowers : but do thou choose
Some happier brow to wear thy garlands green.

ETERNAL Father who didst all create,
 In whom we live and to whose bosom move,
 To all men be Thy name known which is Love,
 Till its loud praises sound at heaven's high gate.
 Perfect Thy kingdom in our passing state,
 That here on earth Thou mayst as well approve
 Our service as Thou ownest their's above
 Whose joy we echo and in pain await.

Grant body and soul each day their daily bread :
 And should in spite of grace fresh woe begin,
 Even as our anger soon is past and dead
 Be Thy remembrance mortal of our sin :

By Thee in paths of peace Thy sheep be led,
 And in the vale of terror comforted.



NOTE

SONNET 36—*The argument is partly from Michael Angelo: Madrigal xjx.*

SONNET 37—*From Boccaccio.*

SONNET 73—*Partly from the anonymous Sonnet No. 3793 in the Libro Reale "Io vivo di speranza."*

SONNET 74—*The first four lines translated from Michael Angelo's Madrigal "Beati voi."*





